

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

THE GOLDEN CHERONESE, and the Way Thither. By ISABELLA L. BIRD (Mrs. Bushell), author of "A Lady's Life in the Rocky Mountains," "Unbeaten Tracks in Japan," etc. \$10, pp. 483. G. P. Putnam's Sons.

No other modern traveller knows how to travel, to see and to write as successfully as does this energetic Englishwoman. Nothing tires her, nothing alarms her; and her enjoyment of everything novel and unusual stirs her pen to the freshest and raciest description. She has eyes for the pathos and the fun of uncivilized as well as of civilized peoples. Her nerves are so stout that she can walk calmly through the agonies of an Eastern prison, and when bitten by a centipede she screams no screams, forthwith, but coolly cuts the bite with a penknife, squeezes it, and pours ammonia recklessly over it. As for sufferings of this kind, indeed, she has a more than masculine contempt, and describes with calmness the way in which after a few days' visit with prodigious Malayan tiger mosquitoes she was obliged to sew up her swollen and painful feet in linen, stockings being an impossibility.

She has a wholesome taste for statistics and political situations and can put them as neatly on paper as she does the poetical pictures of tropical forests and streams in which are expressed a thoroughly refined sense of the beautiful. In short this lady is extraordinarily well-fitted for the work in which she takes such evident delight, and the readers of her fascinating books will hope that it may be long before her shadow grows less.

Her adventures in Milton's "Golden Chersonese," otherwise the Malay Peninsula, were well worth recital. Her animated descriptions of the natives, of their life and habits and homes and surroundings, will give her reader such a clear picture of that distant region as he can find nowhere else. Her book is full of color, sparkle, a movement, and if she has to chronicle mishaps she does it so pleasantly that one cannot but applaud anew the courageous and pernicious traveller. Her account of her elephant ride will recall that well-remembered jaunt upon a smaller and livelier beast undertaken in the Rocky Mountains:

The elephant at last came up, was brought below the porch. They are truly hideous beasts, with their gray, wrinkled, hairless hides; the huge rags "flappers" which cover their ears, and with which they fan themselves; the long, thick tail; the enormous proboscis which coils itself round everything; the formless legs, so like trunks of trees; the pigish back, with the steep slope down to the mean, bare tail, and the general unlikeness to all familiar and friendly beasts. I can hardly write, for little words do not delight me, and my throat—while with its disengaged hand it keeps taking my pen, dipping it in the ink, and scrawling over my letter. It is the most winsome of creatures, but if I were to oppose it there is no knowing what it might do, so I will take another pen. The same is true of an elephant. I am without knowledge of what it may be capable of.

Before I came I dreamt of howdahs and cloth of gold trapings, but my elephant had neither. In fact, there was nothing grand about him but his ugliness. His back was covered with a piece of raw hide, over which were several mats, and on the side of the ridge behind the howdah was a small stick, with a few twigs and bunches of raffia, and hung in place by ropes of rattan. I dropped into one of these baskets from the porch, a young Malay lad into the other, and my bag was tied on behind with rattan. A nose of the same with a stumpy servant for the driver to mount. He was a Malay, wearing a simple kampong, and a gossamer, carmine-colored cloth, who stopped off whenever he had a chance to talk, and left us to ourselves. He drove with a stick, with a curved spike at the end of it, which when the elephant was bad, was hooked into the membranous "flapper," always evoking the appearance and brandishing it over the head of the poor animal, with the intent of frightening it, and sometimes cross-legged, and sometimes with his legs behind the huge ear covers. Mr. Maxwell assured me that he would not send me into a region without a European unless I was perfectly safe, which I am, and I am quite as safe as ever, if I had my being closely connected with my steed.

This mode of riding is not comfortable. One sits facing forward with the feet dangling over the edge of the basket. This edge soon produces a sharp ache or cramp, and when one tries to get relief by leaning back on the backrest, the rider must sit upright, and the elephant himself on the rigid ridge which was the creature's backbone, and always failing, and the mahout was always stopping and pulling the ropes which bound the whole arrangement together, but never succeeding in improving it.

Before we had travelled two hours the great bulk of the elephant, without any warning, gently subsided into a deep sleep in the sun, and the ugly legs being extended in front of him, and the man signified to me to get off, which I did by getting on his head and letting myself down by a rattan rope upon the driver, who made a step of his back, for when "kneeling" as the Malay calls it, is called "sitting," and is needed for comfortable getting on and off. While the whole arrangement of basket was being re-rigged, I clambered into a Malay dwelling of the poorest class, and was courteously received and I regaled with bananas and buffalo milk. Hospitality is one of the Malay virtues. This house is composed of a front part and a back part, the communication being all that is required to a good height on posts. The uprights are of palm, and the elastic, girlish floor of split palms of the invaluable *mangrove* palm (*imperatae filamentosa*). The sides are made of neatly split palms, and the roof, as in all houses, of dried palm leaves. The windows are small, and the curtains are made of palm leaves, which are suspended over high palm poles and stem runners of bamboo. I could not see that a single nail had been used in the house. The whole of it is lashed together with rattan. The furniture consists entirely of mats, which cover a part of the floor, and are used both for sitting on and sleeping on, and a few small, hard, cloth bolsters with embroidery on them. A mat, a spear, some sticks, and a hunting knife hang against the walls of the reception room. In the back room, the province of the women and children, there were an iron pot, a cluster of bananas, and two calabashes. The women were only strong, and the chi dren nothing. The men, who were all very thin, were not strong either.

The Malays are a very fond of fish, and are said to have much skill in tanning birds and animals. Doubtless their low voices and gentle, supple movements never shock the timid sensitiveness of brutes. . . .

I had walked on for some distance, and I had to walk back again, so I found my elephant, had him stop, and when I was in the act of mounting, of some acid fruits, and when I got back to the road was much surprised to find that my boots were filled with blood, and on looking for the cause I found five small brown leeches beautifully striped with yellow, firmly attached to my ankles. I had not seen any before, and I was greatly alarmed, fearing that they were something worse; but the elephant driver, seeing my plight, made some tobacco juice and squirted it over the creatures, when they receded in great disgust. Owing to the exercise I was obliged to take, the bites bled for several hours. I do not remember feeling the first puncture. I have no doubt that the leeches were intent on blood, and never knew that when they were stinging made by man or animal in passing, they stretch themselves to their fullest length, and if they can touch any part of his body or dress they hold on to it, and as quickly as possible reach some spot where they can suck their fill.

I am writing my narrative now as low as my journey, but the things I will tell will be as new to you as they were to me. Now it was certainly to stand upon a carpet of the sensitive plant at noon, with the rays of a nearly vertical sun streaming down from a cloudless, silvery sky, watching the jungle monsterinely, kneeling on the ground with the Malay, who did not even a word of English as my companion, and myself unarmed, and unwarmed in the heart of a region so lately the scene of war, about which seven blue books have been written, and about the lawlessness and violence of which many stories have been industriously circulated.

One day I always dreamed that there must be something splendid in riding on an elephant, but I don't feel the least accession of dignity in consequence. It is true, however, here, that though the trappings are mean and almost savage, a man's importance is estimated by the number of his elephants. When this week I had to get up and jump on to the back, and riding me his hands hauled me up over the head, after which the creature rose gently from the ground, and we went on our journey.

But there was a faint joy, if a joy at all! Soon the driver jolted us off the road, and we struck leaving the elephant to "gang his am gates" half mile or more, and he turned into the jungle, where he began to rend and tear the trees, and then going to a mud-hole, he drew all the water out of it, squirmed it with a loud noise over himself, and his riders, soaking my clothes with it, and when he had done this he lay down, and I lay down, and seemed to stand on his head, by stretching his proboscis and leaning upon it, and when I hit him with my umbrella he uttered the loudest roar I ever heard. My Malay fellow-riders jumped off and ran back for the driver, on which the panther-like animal, down on all four, and I lying on my stomach, was ready with other possible contingencies could occur, always expecting that the beast, which was flourishing his proboscis, would lift me off with it and deposit me in a mud-hole.

On the driver's return I had to dismount again,

and this time the elephant was allowed to go and take a proper bath in a river. He threw quantities of water over himself and took up plenty more with which to cool his sides as he went along. Thick as the wrinkled hide of an elephant looks, a very minute can draw blood from it, and it will not let himself be sagaciously planned with mud to protect his water buffalo. Mounting again, I rode for another two hours, but he crawled about a mile an hour, and seemed to have a steady purpose to lie down. He roared whenever he was asked to go faster, sometimes with a roar of rage, sometimes in anger and sometimes in plain remonstrance. The driver got out and tried to help him, and then he stood still, after which he moved to catch him, singeing by putting a hooked hook in his huge "flapper," but this produced no other effect than a series of howls; then he got on his head again, after which the brute made a succession of huge stamps, each one of which threatened to be a fatal, and then the driver, with a look of despair, got out again, and the animal signs that he would get out, and the elephant refused to lie down, and I set myself down his unshapely shoulder by a rattan rope, till I could use the mahout's shoulders as steps. The baskets were taken off and left at a house, the elephant was turned loose in the jungle; I walked the remaining miles to Kanga, and the arrival of night I reached the mountain. Such is the actual end of my first elephant ride.

I think that altogether I walked about eight miles, and I was not knocked up; this says a great deal for the climate of Perak. The Malay who came with me told the people here that it was "a wild elephant," but I have since been told that it was very sick and tired to death," which I hope is the true version of its most obnoxious conduct.

There is hardly a dull page in Mrs. Bishop's volume. It is in truth so entertaining that the demand of Oliver Twist instinctively rises in one's mind. As for the illustrations, they are poor; the map which accompanies them, however, is reasonably clear, and will be found useful by the careful reader.

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This mode of riding is not comfortable. One sits facing forward with the feet dangling over the edge of the basket. This edge soon produces a sharp ache or cramp, and when one tries to get relief by leaning back on the backrest, the rider must sit upright, and the elephant himself on the rigid ridge which was the creature's backbone, and always failing, and the mahout was always stopping and pulling the ropes which bound the whole arrangement together, but never succeeding in improving it.

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